

Thousands of vulnerable South Australians wait for public housing as homes sit empty

Matt Smith, The Advertiser

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MORE than 1500 housing commission homes are classed as untenable as 21,000 vulnerable South Australian sit on the State Government's official waiting list for public housing.

The number of properties available for public housing in SA is falling according to new figures from the South Australian Housing Trust while the number of untenable properties are on the rise.

The State Government says homes are being sold through an Affordable Homes Program to give tenants the opportunity to get into homeownership.

But Shelter SA, the state's peak housing association, say there is an immediate need for new public housing stock with an estimated 21,000 South Australians sleeping at

Figures show that between 2012/13 and last financial year the number of tenable housing properties reduced from 43,278 properties to 39,074 — a reduction of 10 per cent.

During the same period the number of untenable properties grew from 642 to 1572 — an increase of 144 per cent.

Shelter SA executive director Alice Clark said the number of untenable properties, when compared to the private sector, was quite good.

But, there should not be so many vacancies in the public housing system.

Dr Clark said there were greater issues in the sector.

"The issue is that the total stock that we have got cannot meet the demand," Dr Clark said.

"We desperately need more social housing in this state.



Shelter SA Executive Director Alice Clark

Dr Clark said a greater number of homeless people were noticeable in the Adelaide CBD.

“(But) these are just the very visible homeless,” Dr Clark said.

“They are only about five per cent of the homeless population.

“The real problem is quite hidden. Thousands are staying at friends, in caravan parks, in boarding houses or couch surfing.”

A State Government spokesman said there has been a reduction of housing stock over the past four years due to a number of factors including:

- HOMES being taken out of circulation for significant capital maintenance and major redevelopment;
- PROPERTIES sold through the Affordable Homes Program which give tenants the opportunity to buy those homes and
- COMMUNITY housing providers becoming more relevant and starting to develop their own portfolio of social housing supplementing community need.